

Complaint to the FIFA Ethics Committee regarding FIFA President Gianni Infantino's repeated breaches of the duty of neutrality outlined in article 15 of the FIFA Code of Ethics.

8 December 2025

Basis of Complaint

In line with article 60 and article 11 of the FIFA Code of Ethics (hereafter, the FCE), FairSquare requests that the Ethics Committee investigate the FIFA President Gianni Infantino for repeated breaches of article 15 of the FCE. The complaint primarily relates to four public statements made by Mr Infantino, but we would also request that the Ethics Committee investigate the circumstances surrounding the initial decision to introduce a FIFA Peace Prize and the subsequent awarding of the prize, and the conformity of these processes with FIFA's procedural rules.

FIFA and the Duty of Neutrality

The FCE addresses “conduct, other than those specifically provided by other regulations and connected to the field of play that damages the integrity and reputation of football and in particular to illegal, immoral and unethical behaviour” and it applies to “all officials and players.”¹

Article 15 of the FCE requires that all persons bound by the code remain politically neutral and provides for sanctions for violations:

- (1) In dealings with government institutions, national and international organisations, associations and groupings, persons bound by this Code shall, in addition to observing the basic rules of article 14, remain politically neutral, in accordance with the principles and objectives of FIFA, the confederations, associations, leagues and clubs, and generally act in a manner compatible with their function and integrity.*
- (2) Violation of this article shall be sanctioned with an appropriate fine of at least CHF 10,000 as well as a ban on taking part in any football-related activity for a maximum of two years.*

Article 11 of the FCE states:

- (1) Repeated breaches shall be considered aggravating circumstances. In such circumstances, the Ethics Committee may go beyond the maximum sanction provided for a violation of the relevant rule, as specified in this Code.*

¹ FIFA Code of Ethics (2023), article 1.

The requirement of political neutrality is reinforced in the FIFA Statutes, which state that “FIFA remains neutral in matters of politics and religion”, noting that “exceptions may be made with regard to matters affected by FIFA’s statutory objectives”.² FIFA statutes furthermore require FIFA’s member associations and confederations to include provisions in their own statutes committing them to political neutrality.³

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has offered guidance on the fundamental importance of the duty of neutrality and the type of conduct that is proscribed in the FCE.

In 2023, the CAS stated that:

*“It must be underlined that political neutrality is a key aspect for FIFA, which is also recognised as one of its pillars. ... The above provision requires from the persons bound by the FCE the obligation of remaining politically neutral, which means that no public statements or positioning is allowed, as well as holding any political position.”*⁴

Gianni Infantino's Breaches of the Duty of Neutrality

Mr Infantino has committed four clear breaches of article 15 of the FCE, all of them in relation to statements in support of the President of the United States, Donald Trump. These are described below in logical, rather than chronological order.

(i) Breach 1.

At a press conference with Israel’s Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, in the White House on 4 February 2025, a reporter asked President Trump about his chances of receiving a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in trying to secure the release of Israeli hostages in Gaza. President Trump responded by saying “They will never give me a Nobel Peace Prize. I deserve it, but they will never give it to me.”⁵ On 9 October 2025, Mr Infantino publicly lobbied for President Trump to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2025. On his Instagram account he wrote:

Congratulations to the USA and President Donald J. Trump, Qatar, Egypt, Türkiye and all the countries that collaborated to make the ceasefire and agreement on the first phase of the peace process in the Middle East happen. Peace is great news and is giving new hope for all. Everyone around the world

² FIFA Statutes (2024), article 4.

³ FIFA Statutes (2024), articles 15(a) and 23(a).

⁴ CAS 2019/A/6667 Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona v. FIFA, 13 November 2023.

⁵ The White House did not release a transcript of the meeting but a full transcript is available at The Times of Israel, “Full text: With Netanyahu in Oval Office, Trump talks of ‘permanently’ resettling Gazans”, (6 February 2025), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-with-netanyahu-in-oval-office-trump-talks-of-permanently-resettling-gazans/> (accessed 6 December 2025).

*should now fully support this peace process. President Donald J. Trump definitely deserves the Nobel Peace Prize for his decisive actions.*⁶

This constitutes a clear personal endorsement of President Trump's intervention in a highly contentious political situation.

(ii) Breach 2.

On 10 October 2025, the Nobel Committee awarded the prize to María Corina Machado, prompting criticism from the US government.⁷ On 5 November 2025, FIFA announced the introduction of a FIFA Peace Prize, which, it said, will “reward individuals who have taken exceptional and extraordinary actions for peace and by doing so have united people across the world.”⁸

On 5 December 2025, at the draw for the 2026 men's World Cup finals in Washington D.C., the FIFA President awarded the FIFA Peace Prize to President Trump. A FIFA video screened at the event highlighted President Trump's foreign policy efforts in multiple countries around the world. The narrative in the video went on to say:

He has supported efforts to broker ceasefires and promote diplomatic engagement - actions that helped create conditions in which peace could take root. Under President Trump's leadership, the historic Abraham Accords were signed bringing the first real progress in the Middle East in decades. His leadership has ensured that peace exists between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, Cambodia and Thailand, Kosovo and Serbia, India and Pakistan, Egypt and Ethiopia, and Armenia and Azerbaijan. President Donald J Trump's actions have also ensured that peace exists between Israel and Hamas by brokering the Gaza peace plan, and he is making a continued effort to bring a lasting peace between Russia and Ukraine. This has been a presidency marked by actions to pursue peace around the world. ... For his exceptional actions taken in the cause of world peace that have helped unite people across our world, we congratulate the 2025 FIFA Peace Prize - Football Unites the World recipient, President Donald J Trump.

After the screening of the video President Trump appeared on stage with Mr Infantino, who addressed him directly:

This is what we want from a leader...you definitely deserve the first FIFA Peace Prize for your action for what you have obtained in your way but you obtained it in an incredible way and you can always count Mr President on my support.

⁶ See Instagram account @gianni_infantino, 9 October 2025 at <https://www.instagram.com/p/DPlvcWkiO6Y/> (accessed 27 November 2025).

⁷ Kayla Epstein, “White House blasts Nobel Committee for not awarding Peace Prize to Trump”, (10 October 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c7842qg15p6o>, (accessed 6 December 2025).

⁸ FIFA, “FIFA introduces the FIFA Peace Prize - an award to recognise exceptional actions for peace and unity”, 5 November 2025, available at <https://inside.fifa.com/organisation/media-releases/peace-prize-award-football-unites-the-world-infantino> (accessed 26 November 2025).

This constitutes a clear personal endorsement of President Trump's foreign policy in numerous countries and ongoing armed conflicts. Statements of this nature breach the duty to remain politically neutral as outlined in article 15 of the FCE.

(iii) Breach 3

On 5 November, Mr Infantino was interviewed at the American Business Forum in Miami and was asked about his relationship with President Trump.⁹ Mr Infantino said that he considered President Trump "a really close friend" and said that "I'm a bit surprised sometimes when I read some negative comments [about President Trump]". Mr Infantino then said:

I am not American, but as far as I understand, President Trump was elected in the United States of America and was quite clearly elected. When you are in such a great democracy as the United States of America, you should first of all respect the results of the election, right? In the end he was elected based on the programme, based on what he said. He is just implementing what he said he would do, so I think we should all support what he's doing because I think it's looking pretty good.

In making this statement, Mr Infantino took a very clear political position in breach of his duty to remain politically neutral. Any reasonable interpretation of Mr Infantino's comments would conclude that he a) encouraged people to support the political agenda of President Trump, and b) expressed his personal approval of President Trump's political agenda. Furthermore, there can be no suggestion that these statements were made in his private capacity, since Mr Infantino was appearing at a public event in his role as FIFA President.¹⁰

(iv) Breach 4

On 20 January 2025, Mr Infantino published a short video on his Instagram account in which he thanked President Trump for inviting him to the presidential inauguration rally in Washington D.C. the previous day.¹¹ Mr Infantino concluded the video by saying the following:

Together we will make not only America great again but also the entire world.

This statement indicates support for President Trump's political agenda in breach of Mr Infantino's duty to remain politically neutral. President Trump has consistently used the slogan Make America Great Again in his political campaigning since before he was first elected President of the United States in

⁹ Gianni Infantino interview at the American Business Forum, 5 November 2025 is available here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhoqCDxHiol> (accessed 27 November 2025).

¹⁰ See agenda of the American Business Forum available at <https://www.americanbusiness.com/en/america-business-miami/agenda-miami> (accessed 27 November 2025).

¹¹ See Instagram account @gianni_infantino, 20 January 2025 at https://www.instagram.com/reel/DFCGPCJI_2S/?igsh=M2J1cHEyMmhnbnmxv (accessed 27 November 2025).

2016, and the abbreviation MAGA is commonly used to refer to President Trump's political agenda.¹² Figures close to President Trump have openly sought to attach the MAGA project to the 2026 tournament. In an interview with the Associated Press in October 2025, the executive director of the White House FIFA Task Force, Andrew Giuliani, described the World Cup draw at which FIFA awarded President Trump the Peace Prize as the "MAGA-FIFA World Cup draw."¹³

The United States role as co-host of the men's World Cup in 2026 requires that FIFA engage with the United States government and it is natural and appropriate that as part of this process Mr Infantino would wish to forge a functional, diplomatic relationship with the US President in order to ensure that FIFA fulfills its statutory objectives. However, Mr Infantino's engagement with President Trump must be underpinned by and in conformity with his duty of neutrality, which requires that he be non-partisan and impartial on matters of US domestic and foreign policy, unless speaking about issues that invoke FIFA's own legal or human rights responsibilities.¹⁴ In offering clear support for President Trump's political agenda at home and abroad, Mr Infantino has repeatedly breached his duty to remain politically neutral, and done so in a way that poses a clear threat to the integrity and reputation of football and of FIFA itself.

(v) Mr Infantino's role in the decision to initiate a FIFA Peace Prize and award the prize to President Trump

We would request that the Ethics Committee investigate not only Mr Infantino's public statements in support of President Trump, but also Mr Infantino's role in the internal FIFA processes that led to the creation of the FIFA Peace Prize, and the decision to award the prize to President Trump on 5 December 2025. The award of a prize of this nature to a sitting political leader is in and of itself a clear breach of FIFA's duty of neutrality.

The FIFA Statutes indicate that the decision to introduce a FIFA Peace Prize should have been taken by the FIFA Council. Article 34 of the statutes states that "the Council defines FIFA's mission, strategic direction, policies and values, in particular with regard to the organisation and development of football at worldwide level and all related matters." The FIFA President does not have the authority to unilaterally dictate the organisation's mission, strategic direction, policies and values. In line with article

¹² The Merriam Webster dictionary defines MAGA as "a political movement" and carries a clarifying note explaining that "the MAGA movement began during the 2016 presidential campaign of Donald Trump, the Republican nominee" and that "its name is derived from Trump's campaign slogan 'Make America Great Again.'" See Merriam Webster online dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/MAGA> (accessed 27 November 2025).

¹³ Graham Dunbar and Seung Min Kim, "Trump and Infantino's bond shapes a 'MAGA' World Cup", Associated Press, (6 October 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-world-cup-soccer-gianni-infantino-65a8160052baa74a007403ad20bbc256> (accessed 6 December 2025).

¹⁴ In this regard it should be noted that, in July 2025, more than ninety US civil society organisations wrote to Mr Infantino to express their concern about current immigration policies and enforcement measures in the United States and their impact on the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup and the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup. The letter invoked FIFA's statutory responsibilities and called on the FIFA President to "publicly urge President Trump to reverse these policies and practices." Mr Infantino did not respond to that letter, and has never made any comment about the issues it raises. The letter and its signatories can be seen here https://fairsq.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/FIFA_US_2026_updated.pdf (accessed 27 November 2025).

35 of the statutes, his role in this regard is to “ensure that FIFA’s mission, strategic direction, policies and values, as defined by the Council, are protected and implemented, in particular by the general secretariat.”

In the FIFA statement of 2 October 2025 in which they announced the introduction of the FIFA Peace Prize, there is no mention of the FIFA Council having been involved in the decision to launch a peace prize.¹⁵ Moreover there is no mention of who would be involved in adjudicating, nor the criteria to be applied. Similarly, there is no mention of the FIFA Peace Prize in the agenda of the FIFA Council meeting held on 2 October 2025.¹⁶

On 1 December 2025, The Athletic published information that further indicated that the FIFA Council was not involved in the decision.

Multiple sources familiar with the process, all of whom wished to remain anonymous to protect relationships, said the Council and FIFA’s vice-presidents were not consulted or involved in the creation of a FIFA peace prize and that it was not discussed at the prior FIFA Council. They have also not had input into the selection criteria for deciding a recipient. Some found out via a media release.¹⁷

On 5 December 2025, the New York Times reported similar information and alleged that Mr Infantino was personally responsible for the institution of the prize.

Mr. Infantino, president of FIFA, soccer’s global governing body, who had publicly lobbied for Mr. Trump to receive the [Nobel] peace prize, simply had his organization establish its own. The announcement of the “FIFA Peace Prize — Football Unites the World” was so hastily arranged that it surprised several of the body’s most senior officials, including board members and vice presidents, according to four soccer executives briefed on the events.¹⁸

On 11 November 2025, Human Rights Watch wrote to FIFA to request, among other things, details of the criteria to be applied in the award of the prize, and details of who would be involved in the adjudication process.¹⁹ FIFA did not respond to the letter.

¹⁵ FIFA, “FIFA introduces the FIFA Peace Prize - an award to recognise exceptional actions for peace and unity”, 5 November 2025, available at <https://inside.fifa.com/organisation/media-releases/peace-prize-award-football-unites-the-world-infantino> (accessed 26 November 2025).

¹⁶ Agenda of meeting no. 33 of the FIFA Council, 2 October 2025, available online at <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/6e36a93f5e2f9377/original/Agenda-Council-meeting-no-33.pdf> (accessed 27 November 2025).

¹⁷ Adam Crafton, “World Cup 2026 – what we’re hearing: United States wants to host Copa America 2028”, The Athletic, 1 December 2025, available at https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6849181/2025/12/01/world-cup-2026-what-were-hearing-united-states-wants-to-host-copa-america-2028/?source=emp_shared_article (accessed 2 December 2025).

¹⁸ Tariq Panja and Luke Broadwater, “As Trump Covets Nobel Peace Prize, FIFA Cozies Up to Him With Its Own Award”, New York Times, (5 December 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/05/us/politics/trump-fifa-peace-prize-world-cup-infantino.html> (accessed 6 December 2025).

¹⁹ Adam Crafton, “Human Rights Watch questions FIFA over ‘Peace Prize’, receives no response”, The Athletic, 1 December

On 4 December 2025, The Guardian reported that a FIFA Committee would be involved in future decisions to award the Peace Prize, but would not be involved in the 2025 decision.

The Fifa prize is seen internally as its version of the president's award at Uefa, the European football body, suggesting Infantino's say will be decisive. It is also understood that a new "social responsibility" committee within Fifa has been given the central role in devising the "process" through which winners will be chosen – but will not sit before this year's recipient is announced.²⁰

Under the presidency of Gianni Infantino, the FIFA Council's role in the decision-making process has often been circumvented by the Bureau of the Council, a mechanism that was introduced into FIFA's governance structure in 2016.²¹ The Bureau of the Council consists of the FIFA President, and the presidents of FIFA's six regional confederations. Article 38 of the FIFA Statutes state:

- *The Bureau of the Council shall deal with all matters within the competence of the Council requiring immediate decision between two meetings of the Council.*
- *The President shall convene meetings of the Bureau of the Council. If a meeting cannot be convened within an appropriate period of time, decisions may be passed through other means of communication.*
- *Such decisions shall have immediate legal effect. The President shall notify the Council immediately of the decisions passed by the Bureau of the Council. All decisions taken by the Bureau of the Council shall be ratified by the Council at its next meeting.*

These statutory rules appear to have the effect of empowering the Bureau of the Council the power to circumvent the FIFA Council in instances where they determine that they cannot wait until the next meeting, which has no authority to challenge its decisions, and it is controlled by the FIFA President, who has the power to convene its meetings. In response to FairSquare's concerns about the excessive powers that the Bureau of the Council confers on the FIFA President, FIFA's Chief Legal and Compliance Officer, Emilio Garcia, wrote to FairSquare on 31 October 2024 and said this about the Bureau of the Council.

The Bureau of the Council is a collegiate body that makes its decisions by majority vote. At no point does the President unilaterally make decisions on behalf of FIFA or override the decision making power of the FIFA Council or the Bureau of the FIFA Council. The Bureau exists in order to assess urgent

2025, available at

https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6852219/2025/12/01/fifa-human-rights-watch-peace-prize/?source=emp_shared_article (accessed 2 December 2025).

²⁰ Daniel Boffey, "Revealed: Myanmar junta 'crony' given key role behind Fifa peace prize", The Guardian, (4 December 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/dec/04/revealed-myanmar-junta-crony-given-key-role-behind-fifa-peace-prize> (accessed 6 December 2025).

²¹ See FairSquare, "Substitute: The Case for the External Reform of FIFA", (October 2024), p. 81.

*matters and any decisions of this body must subsequently be ratified by the FIFA Council at its next plenary meeting.*²²

We would therefore request that the Ethics Committee investigate whether the decisions to introduce an annual FIFA Peace Prize and then award the prize to President Trump were taken by the FIFA Council or by the Bureau of the Council or unilaterally by Mr Infantino himself. If the Bureau of the Council took either or both of these decisions, we would request the Ethics Committee investigate the decision-making process of the Bureau of the Council and the role of Mr Infantino therein.

If it is the case that Mr Infantino used the powers conferred on him by article 38 of the FIFA Statutes to circumvent the FIFA Council in a matter that falls squarely within their competence, then this should be taken into account as critical context. If Mr Infantino acted unilaterally and without any statutory authority this should be considered an egregious abuse of power.

²² Correspondence from Emilio Garcia Silvero to Nicholas McGeehan, 31 October 2024, available at <https://fairsq.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/FIFA-response-to-FairSquare.pdf> (accessed 2 December 2025).

